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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [COE](#) [EU](#) [EUN](#) [MD](#)  
SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF EUROPE GROUP  
UNIMPRESSED WITH MOLDOVAN REFORMS

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In an October 29 meeting Vladimir Ristovski, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (COE) in Moldova, briefed the Ambassador about the recent visit of a Council of Europe delegation. Ristovski stated that overall the visiting group left with a very negative impression of developments in Moldova. The visitors did not believe that Moldova had made adequate progress in the reform process. End Summary.

Inadequate Level of Reform  
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12. (C) Ristovski explained that a recent COE delegation had been dissatisfied with the level of reform in Moldova. The delegation included Claudia Luciani, Director of the Directorate for Political Advice and Cooperation, and Olena Petsun, Advisor of the Directorate for Political Advice and Cooperation. He pointed out that the delegation had suffered an unpleasant experience with the People's Christian Democratic Party (PPCD). During their meeting, a PPCD member accused the European Union of conspiring with the Russians. When asked whether a basis for such accusations towards the EU existed, Ristovski said of course not.

13. (C) The Council of Europe group had the impression that Moldova had made insufficient progress on reforms, especially in the areas of human rights and rule of law. Ristovski also noted that Moldovan officials had not been able to report on new progress in certain areas, such as the penitentiary system. For example, he said, no new cells were planned for construction.

14. (C) The group had the impression that the Party of Communists sought to consolidate its authority along several fronts. The visitors felt that the ruling party did not truly intend to undertake actual improvements in areas needing reform. They had the impression that, in meetings with Deputy Foreign Minister Kistruga, she did not seem to know what she was speaking about, and they thought that she was covering for her superiors

without sufficient preparation.

15. (C) Overall, the situation in Moldova did not impress the COE visitors. The COE visitors believed that Moldovans had not made enough improvements, although they noted progress in areas such as anti-corruption. The Council of Europe group considered improvements such as this, however, to be slight. Ristovski emphasized that the Council of Europe was ready to help, but believed that Moldova was not ready to make real changes. He also said that the Government of Moldova was clearly equating the interests of the state with those of the Party of Communists.

Comment  
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16. (C) Members of the European community seem to be divided into two schools of thought regarding reforms in Moldova. The first school believes that once a European Union promise for future membership for Moldova is extended, then reform will follow. The second school expects reform to come first and then membership may be offered as a reward. Ristovski appears to favor the first school of thought, although the two members of the COE

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delegation were of the latter school. We believe that the COE delegation's negative assessment failed to take into account many positive reforms which the Moldovans have put into place including the establishment of the Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP) and improvements in legislation regarding anti-corruption. Regarding the COE delegation's observation on prisons in Moldova, the Moldovan Ministry of Justice announced the tender for construction of a penitentiary institution of 1600 places of detention in Chisinau. The tender was scheduled to be examined on October 23.

KEIDERLING